“Are we there yet?” It’s the classic backseat query on family road trips.

When it comes to the eventful journey our University of Miami family is taking together, the answer is always “Not just yet.”

Indeed, for dynamic institutions like ours, “there” seems always to be just down the road and around the next bend. We are continually making key decisions at major crossroads and fine-tuning our itinerary as unexpected opportunities and unforeseen challenges emerge.

A number is just a number, and the imaginary odometer measuring the ground we have covered on our shared excursion reflects not only previous destinations but ongoing discoveries. Still, my tenth anniversary on the job here at UM represents a mile marker of sorts—an opportunity to reflect on where we’ve been and where we’re going.

At my inauguration ceremony ten years ago, I described the University as the beating heart of Miami, and Miami itself as “el mundo”—the world. Today, having lived for a decade in this beautiful, diverse, and endlessly fascinating region, I still see our city and our place in it that way—more vividly than ever.

Ten years ago I spoke of our mission in terms of preparing students for assuming roles as tomorrow’s leaders. Advancing knowledge in academic disciplines across the board. Moving into the top ranks of biomedical discovery and patient care. And serving as an active partner in our community’s future. I committed the University to “sowing seeds of excellence” in every sphere: from classrooms to concert halls, theatres to research labs, art studios to athletic fields.

Today we have achieved all these goals, and so much more. The magnificent successes of the past decade are the work of many hands, and any laurels earned do not rest solely on the shoulders of one administration or even one generation.
Standing on Strong Shoulders

As the University of Miami’s fifth president, I inherited a strong and stable foundation from my predecessors. Their vision of what the University could be and their steady strides toward realizing that potential—often in the face of challenges, from ravaging hurricanes to social upheavals, that would have daunted less stalwart souls—allowed me the rare opportunity to assume leadership of an energetic institution that was already on the move toward unprecedented excellence and national acclaim.

Much credit is also due to the University of Miami Board of Trustees, the community leaders and committed partners who share our highest aspirations and support our finest accomplishments. I especially want to thank the board chairs whose guidance and fellowship have been so invaluable: Carlos M. de la Cruz Sr.; Phillip Frost; Dean C. Colson; Marta S. Weeks; Phillip T. George; and current chairman Leonard L. Abess—who, after his grandfather, Arthur A. Ungar (in whose honor the Ungar Building is named), and his father, Leonard Abess, is a third-generation UM trustee.

The University embraces its community—a close relationship that imbues everything we do—and the community has responded in turn. That is the simple yet powerful secret behind the historic success of the campaign that inspired such generosity during the first seven years of my presidency.

*Momentum: The Campaign for the University of Miami* presented a bold vision of propelling the University toward distinction as one of the nation’s leading research universities. Reaching its $1 billion goal a year ahead of schedule and ultimately raising more than $1.4 billion, *Momentum* had a truly transformational impact on the University.

*Momentum* also broadened and deepened the University’s relationships with its many devoted constituencies. Alumni and alumni-led organizations gave some $376 million during the campaign, paving the way for high-profile achievements and enhanced pride for ‘Canes everywhere.

Advancing our Vision

True to the campaign’s name and lasting impact, our momentum continues. Fundraising totals for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2011 came to $172 million, nearly double the $86.2 million raised a decade earlier in FY 2002. Just as importantly, for ten years in a row, the University of Miami has been awarded the top, four-star rating for sound fiscal management from Charity Navigator, one of the nation’s leading independent charity evaluators. Fewer than 1 percent of the charities rated by this organization have received such consistently outstanding ratings.

This vigilant stewardship has been complemented in recent years by a comprehensive strategic plan that identifies institutional priorities in four key areas: the undergraduate experience, graduate and research programs, and faculty development, as well as the infrastructure needed to support these endeavors.

In all of these areas, we are making exciting progress. We’re decoding the human genome and shedding light on hemispheric climate...
patterns. We’re fostering entrepreneurial approaches to learning and nuanced explorations of the humanities. We’re creating programs that meld disciplines in novel ways to meet unprecedented challenges. And we’re opening up the unforgettable experience of a UM education to greater numbers of deserving students.

Our ever-brighter student body reflects the University’s bold spirit. For our fall 2011 cohort of about 2,150 enrolled freshmen, we received about 28,000 applications—nearly twice the 14,721 received in 2001. During the same timeframe, the average SAT score of incoming freshmen rose from 1190 to over 1315, while those in the top 10 percent of their high school classes now compose 71 percent of our freshman class, up from 51 percent a decade ago.

**Aptitude for Achievement**

Because we have made an institutional commitment to keep the size of our incoming student body stable, we have been able to focus on quality rather than quantity, thus ensuring a superb student experience. Our students come from varied socioeconomic backgrounds, all walks of life, and more than 110 countries. And, in increasing numbers, they fulfill their marvelous potential. Over the past decade, our six-year graduation rate—a key measure of student success—has jumped from 63 to 80 percent.

The University’s research mission is stronger than ever. We currently are home to more than 2,800 extramurally funded research projects (compared with just over 1,700 in 2001) as well as more than 5,500 graduate students and postdoctoral trainees. Faculty research and sponsored program expenditures increased by more than 75 percent over the past ten years, from $202 million in 2001 to nearly $361 million in last year’s extremely competitive funding period.

We recently surpassed $150 million in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding University-wide and have become the top NIH-funded medical school in the state, while our National Science Foundation grant funding increased by 5 percent University-wide over the past year. These gains are a direct reflection of our recruitment of top physicians and highly productive scientists from across the nation; the number of University faculty in prestigious national academies has risen from one to eight since my arrival at UM.
Sharing Stellar Successes

This September we were delighted to learn that we were ranked 38th among the nation’s best universities for 2012 by U.S. News & World Report, reflecting a dramatic rise of some nine spots in just one year—and an amazing total of 29 spots since 2001. UM was the only institution in the top 50 to make such a significant advance in this prestigious ranking during the past year. This achievement directly reflects our steady climb to excellence, and the credit goes to our trustees, faculty, student body, staff, alumni, parents, and all our supporters over the years. It is a tribute to all who believe in the University of Miami and quality education, and a success story for not just the University but the entire South Florida community.

This wonderful recognition capped a banner year here at the University. Our UM family came together in October 2010 to celebrate the opening of the Robert and Judi Prokop Newman Alumni Center, a gracious gathering place for loyal ‘Canes built entirely with alumni contributions. Just a few months later, 2011 wasn’t even two weeks old when we orchestrated our second highly successful Global Business Forum. Organized by the School of Business Administration, the University-wide conference featured an impressive lineup of corporate, policy, and thought leaders examining “The Business of Health Care: Defining the Future”—and placed the University on the intellectual frontier of this industry that touches all of our lives.

Not pausing for a moment, in February we unveiled the results of a major yearlong expansion of the Patti and Allan Herbert Wellness Center. Funded primarily by a generous gift from alumni and original center patrons Patti and Allan Herbert, the project has been very well received by our campus community.

Driving Distinction

Back on the academic front, this summer we welcomed two new deans who bring scholarly distinction and pioneering leadership to the University. Gregory J. Shepherd, dean of the School of Communication, was previously dean of the Scripps College of Communication at Ohio University. He brings the big-picture perspective needed to nurture the next generation of communication professionals at the school, which recently celebrated its 25th anniversary.

In August Eugene “Gene” Anderson became dean of the School of Business Administration. Most recently as associate dean for academic affairs at the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business, he spearheaded a variety of forward-thinking programs and initiatives, building a wealth of experience and insight that dovetail beautifully with the school’s goals and areas of opportunity.
Hurricane Athletics also recently recruited several new leaders: athletics director Shawn Eichorst, football head coach Al Golden, and men’s basketball head coach Jim Larranaga. All are passionate about the Hurricanes and fully committed to encouraging our student-athletes toward distinguished performance in the classroom, on the playing field, and in life.

This fall saw the dedication and grand opening of the 252,000-square-foot R+D Building One, the first phase of the University of Miami Life Science & Technology Park. In addition to providing sustainable, state-of-the-art infrastructure that fosters the discovery and development of life-enhancing medical and technological discoveries, the park is an engine of economic progress for our community.

We are also moving ahead on important projects on our Coral Gables campus, thanks to the historic and far-reaching University Campus District development plan we reached last year with the City of Coral Gables. The city, the community, and the University all came out winners in this agreement, which I count among the proudest achievements of my presidency. We now have a thoughtful and comprehensive road map to guide our campus improvements for many years into the future.

Reshaping our Future

Among the most eagerly anticipated new campus destinations is our Student Activities Center, on which we have just broken ground. Made possible by a $20 million lead gift from Fairholme Foundation, the 118,000-square-foot facility features an array of gathering and activity spaces. A dazzling campus destination designed in every detail to meet the needs and support the aspirations of UM’s highly involved student community, it will also house a brand-new incarnation of our beloved Rathskeller when it opens in 2013.

Promising to make a major contribution to the well-being of the entire Gables campus community and beyond is a multi-specialty UHealth – University of Miami Health System clinic. Slated to open in 2013, the new clinic will serve students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding area.

In the pages that follow, you’ll find highlights from this amazing decade at the University of Miami. They are, necessarily, only a sampling of hundreds of noteworthy activities and achievements. Interwoven among each and every one of them are the countless moments of inspiration, discovery, persistence, collaboration, compassion, and courage that make up the life of a great university.

Meanwhile, even as we look back, tomorrow tugs at our sleeve and pulls us forward. It urges us to make the powerful, focused commitments that turn “what ifs” into “why nots.” As one of the nation’s leading research universities, replete with our signature energy and passion, we are making the breakthroughs that reshape the road ahead even as we travel it.

Yes, it’s true: We’ll never be completely “there.” But the joy is in the journey—and having such brilliant, dedicated, and tireless companions along for the ride.

Donna E. Shalala
President